

A Unit of the United States

Philadelphia, March 12th 1828

*vi.*

At receipt at the Custom, this morning  
from Messrs. Woodward & Loeb of Brooklyn,  
a specimen of a counterfeit half-dollar  
which I send to you, with the impression  
of a part cut off for analysis. As  
the resemblance to the legitimate coin  
is sufficiently close, both in the execution  
and the material, to make <sup>important in the future</sup> it dangerous,  
I have thought that you might judge  
it proper to cause an investigation into  
the matter to be made by the Agents  
of the Treasury.

If the price be compared with the  
value of the same date, (<sup>1852</sup> ~~1851~~) many  
points of difference may be readily deter-  
mined; yet it must be acknowledged  
that the mechanical execution is so good  
as not to be likely to excite general  
suspicion.

The metal of which it is made appears to be fine what is called German Silver, which is a compound of Copper, Zinc, and Nickel; and may

be distinguished from standard silver by the following tests.

1st. There is a difference, though not very manifest, in the shade of colour, the German silver having a closer resemblance to copper.

2d. It has a peculiar greasy feel, which is not furnished by silver, and which is readily perceived on comparing the two.

3d. It is promptly dissolved in cold nitric acid, while silver is but slowly acted upon.

4th. If a solution of common salt be in salt water, be added to the solution, there will be but a trace of precipitation, while salt causes there down the solution of silver in a white insoluble powder, the abundance of

5th. It is dissolved in nitro-muriatic acid, and silver is not.

6th. The specific gravity of the mixture being about  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , and that of standard silver about  $10\frac{1}{4}$ .

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examined by  
R. M. P.

R. M. P.

Dr

To  
Hon. Lewis Woodbury,  
Sec. of Treasury.

P.S. I find that we have in our collection about another counterfeit half dollar which the Collector thinks has been here at least two years, and which exactly resembles that sent for our examination by Messrs. Woodwards & Clark. I had supposed this last to be a new counterfeit, and, on that ground, never suggested an inquiry into the matter, but it is perhaps now too late to hope for success in an investigation.